

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION The following summaries consist of quick, general reviews of each Lesson in Step One. These summaries are intended to refresh in your memory, and to fix firmly in your mind, the most vital points presented in the preceding Lessons. These reviews will also enhance your understanding of the relationship between theory and practice of the techniques, and of the importance of one to the other. Review is an important factor in any study, and particularly in the study of Self-Realization Fellowship teachings. If you have been steadfastly practicing SRF techniques, you will find that each time you review a Lesson you will discover something worthwhile that may have escaped you in previous study; or perhaps a point that had not particularly impressed you before will "come home" to you, giving unexpected satisfaction. It is through repetition of and meditation upon the truth that we learn the most.

The summaries include some explanatory notes not contained in the Lesson proper. It has been our sincere purpose to present the authentic "why" of all the principles expounded by the masters of India. In order to cover thoroughly these fundamental principles, the summaries that constitute Lesson 26 will be continued in a series of installments.

The review questions at the end of each installment of the summaries are intended to help you in your study of the Lessons, and can be an invaluable aid to you in evaluating your understanding of the teachings. The answers to these review questions are to be kept by you. At the end of Step II, you will have an opportunity to submit a written report on your practice of the techniques you are learning in the Lessons. In the meantime, if ever you feel the need for guidance in your practice of the Energization Exercises or Hong-Sau Technique, you are most welcome to write to the Mother Center. Our spiritual counselors here are always happy to be of assistance.

* * *

FIRST STEP In the first step you have learned the importance of connecting the little wave of life (the human body) with the Ocean of Life (the vastness of nature and God). Nature is the physical aspect, the body of God; while the life and consciousness hidden in men, animals, and flowers, and all forms of matter are the soul or consciousness of God. Man has a soul, life energy, and a physical body; God as Cosmic Intelligence has cosmic life, and His body is the cosmos.

If a person constantly looks at a wave, he becomes less and less aware of the sea. Likewise, when we concentrate upon and become attached to the little wave of our life, we lose sight of the Ocean of Spirit from which our life wave emanated. As variously situated electric lamps may be lighted by power flowing from a single dynamo, so all the variously moving and existing human beings are actuated by the one cosmic dynamo of God's intelligent Light.

LESSON NO. 1 Every Self-Realizationist should say daily the prayer given at the beginning of this Lesson:

"Heavenly Father, Divine Mother, Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswarji, Guru-Preceptor Paramahansa Yogananda, saints of all religions, I bow to you all. May Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts."

Self-Realization Fellowship teaches the highest principle of spiritual living: meditation combined with activity. SRF students are taught how to dedicate inwardly to God all the day's activities; and, when work is done, to commune with Him in the temple of silence.

God must be earnestly sought. And when you are very desirous of finding Him, the Lord sends a guru. When you are in tune with a true guru you are in tune with God. The relationship is eternal. Even after death, a guru continues to help his disciples (i.e., those who follow his teachings). This is a spiritual law.

Hence every SRF student should have deep regard for the link of SRF Gurus--Jesus Christ, Bhagavan Krishna, Mahavatar Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, and Paramahansa Yogananda--with whom all SRF students are connected by affiliation with Self-Realization Fellowship, founded by Paramahansa Yogananda.

SRF teaches the student to practice control of the body until he is its master. The human body has to be made ready to receive the divine power. The state of consciousness has to be right; then God will automatically come to you! But God may not respond right away. Only when He is convinced that you seek Him, not for the satisfaction of temporal desires or for spiritual glamour and glory, but simply to be His, unconditionally and forever, will He open the door.

Jesus and the Masters are great reflections of God, perfect examples for you to follow. Thus you may know you too are a potential child of God. Whatever your errors, they belong to the past; they are not you. God is yours! The greatest sin is ignorance of our oneness with Him.

Self-Realization Fellowship offers you the universal technique of salvation, the royal highway on which all theological bypaths conjoin. If you will study these Lessons and then practice them daily you will soon realize a new goal of happiness, awakening, and Self-realization that will forever shed light upon you so that you may live according to the highest standards of existence.

Self-Realization Fellowship teachings are a great dispensation sent forth into the world by Jesus Christ and Mahavata Babaji to show the unity of original Christianity and original Yoga, and to bring real God-communion to people in all lands. Self-Realization is the new dispensation that was promised in the Scriptures.

LESSON NO. 2 Every day you should commune with God as the ever new joy of meditation. Every day you should spread the message of Self-Realization Fellowship by the example of your life, and thus be a fisher of souls, in order to please God. Develop will power. Will and act until you achieve victory in everything worthwhile. Through will power you can energize the body. Learn to develop physiological, unthinking, blind will power into the dynamic divine will that Jesus referred to when he said: "Thy will be done."

Will power should never be used wrongly; but the will should be used, guided by wisdom. Will power was given to man for his use. It is a metaphysical error not to try to use our will, for we cannot help using our will in every movement and every act. Only when we are physically dead or mentally dead do we not use will power. When our own will is guided by true wisdom it becomes one with the wisdom-inspired will of God. Our will and His will become one and the same thing. We should not isolate our will from God, but realize that behind the little motor of our own will throbs the Infinite Dynamo of God's endlessly powerful inexhaustible will.

A wish might be called "volition in embryo"--helpless, unformed, lacking in power. It may remain as it is without further manifestation and eventually dissolve for lack of energy. Or it may grow into desire and then determination. Even determination may become discouraged. But when determination becomes volition, it becomes all-powerful. A volition consists of a series of continuous, never-discouraged, unceasing determinations accompanied by activities revolving around a desire until it becomes dynamic enough to produce the much-craved-for result. You can utterly destroy the roots of failure in your life by exercising your will until realization comes that this dynamic will is already in your possession as the image of God within you.

LESSON NO. 3 Many persons who are externally seeking truth fail to reach their goal because they do not make the effort to apply the different truths in actual life in order to experience

them within. They fail to use their discriminative powers to separate the kernel of truth from untested beliefs, and so they never feel the joyousness of actual realization of truth through the intuitive faculty of the Self.

Led by curiosity and imitation, they enjoy listening to new ideas from new personalities. They enjoy the thrill of change. They become enamored of the "path" and forget the objective, although impelled by a theoretical desire to live according to high principles.

One should avoid theoretical indigestion caused by swallowing new ideas without assimilating them. Forsake the blind alleys of theological beliefs. Give selective, practical attention to your chosen path and keep on practicing and finding results in the Self. The best techniques of meditation are contained in the Lessons of Self-Realization Fellowship. This is the direct, the airplane way, to God. Keep going! One will know he has found the best way by a growing feeling of satisfaction; by an ever-increasing peace, wisdom, and assurance from within; and by a continuously progressing intuitive perception, and an inner happiness of silence.

LESSON NO. 4 Consider no one a stranger. First establish perfect friendship with one or two souls, then offer that divine friendship to all. Do not poison friendship by demand and compulsion and wrong familiarity; or by courtesy, or harsh speech, or mental cruelty. Practice friendship in your parental, filial, conjugal, or any other relationship, as the case may be. Be a true friend.

Friendship consists in becoming increasingly useful in every way (materially and spiritually) to your friends. Therefore, keep unceasingly developing if you want to be a good friend, or to inspire friends, or to receive others as your friends.

Love your enemies, for they too are your brothers. We are all children of one Father. See the image of God in all. Some people from the first meeting prove to be real friends always, while others that we meet daily we never really know.

Behold all races, your brother creatures, assembled beneath the canopy of God's friendship. Let those who are our own come unto us, until we know everyone is our own.

LESSON NO. 5 Energize your body by recharging it from the inner Source. Although you must eat properly in the mortal state, you should learn to rise above food-consciousness. When you make up your mind not to be a slave to hunger, you find that your will power can sustain your body by connecting it with the electro-protonic energy that surrounds your body.

The wet battery depends upon electricity and distilled water; so the body battery depends upon life force coming down from the medulla-battery of the brain, as well as from food and oxygen and sunshine. But as a dry battery depends only upon electricity, and not upon distilled water,

so also the body battery, by training, can wholly or partly depend upon the life force flowing from cosmic energy.

The life in the body depends directly upon the cosmic energy, which comes through the antenna of the medulla oblongata, and is stored in the cerebrum and spinal plexuses. Bodily life depends upon food, oxygen, sunshine, and so forth only indirectly; but the soul, having identified itself with the body, thinks that food is the only source of life. When one learns to live more and more by will power and energy, he realizes, as Jesus did, that man's body battery does not depend upon bread alone (solids, gases, and sunshine), but upon every word (vibrating energy) that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (medulla oblongata), through which the operator-will draws vibrating energy (Word) into the body.

The actual proof that the body can be gradually sustained by cosmic energy is proven by the following: whenever you are tired, you can replace some energy by drinking milk or eating food; but the next time you are tired, instead of eating food, practice the Recharging Exercises gently for ten minutes. When you have perfected your practice of the exercises you will find that your tired feeling will leave you without your eating food. This is an unfailing method of removing fatigue by cosmic energy, in place of food.

1. Physically charge your body by rousing cosmic energy through will power, as in the Recharging Exercises.
2. By feeling that ever new Bliss-God in meditation, stamp immortality on your changing life and make it changeless. Then, as waves change, but the ocean does not, so birth, childhood, youth, age, and death will dance in your consciousness like dream-waves without changing the one unforgettable ever conscious ocean of Cosmic Consciousness.

INTRODUCTION TO REVIEW QUESTIONS

The questions on page 6 are designed to help you in your review. After you have studied the summaries of this installment, and have gone over the corresponding Lessons, write out the answers to the following questions from memory. When you have written them all, go back to the Lessons and check your answers. The answers may all be found in the Lessons or in the summaries. Keep these answers yourself, and refer to them again from time to time. They will be an index to your spiritual progress and understanding of the teachings. This is the first of four sets of review questions covering the Lessons in Step 1. The questions in this first set cover Lessons 1 through 5.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP ONE

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 1

1. What is the highest principle of spiritual living?
2. (a) Who are the Gurus of SRF?
(b) Why should one have deep regard for them?
3. When does God respond to the devotee?
4. What is the greatest sin?
5. What is the mission of Self-Realization Fellowship?

Lesson 2

1. What is the dynamo of all our powers?
2. Distinguish between "wish," "desire," "intention," and "volition."
3. What is meant by "blind will"? "thinking will"?
4. How can you be sure you are using your will rightly?
5. Should you use your will, or passively let God use it?
6. How is will the savior of man?

Lesson 3

1. What is the difference between curiosity seekers and real seekers?
2. What causes theological and theoretical indigestion?
3. What is the airplane way to God?
4. Why is a guru important on the spiritual path?
5. How can one know he has found the best way?

Lesson 4

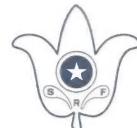
1. How will you attract friends to you?
2. (a) How should one serve one's friends?
(b) Who is your best friend?
3. (a) How can you learn to love your enemies?
(b) Why is it important to do so?
4. Why is good company important?
5. What is your worst company?
6. How can you recognize friends of past incarnations?

Lesson 5

1. What is a good breathing exercise to practice while walking?
2. (a) Upon what sources does the body depend for sustenance?
(b) Which is the most important?
3. Compare an ordinary battery with the body battery.
4. What did Jesus refer to when he spoke of the "mouth of God"?

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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 6 Become a son of God by enlarging the caliber of your consciousness through concentration and meditation.

We can receive the ocean of God-consciousness by enlarging the boundaries of our consciousness through meditation. The body is fed from external sources by food, oxygen, and so forth; and internally it is fed by cosmic consciousness and life force.

Most exercises teach the student to concentrate upon muscles, body movements, and instruments of exercise (such as dumbbells and barbells). SRF gives recharging exercises to energize the body by conscious will. Exercise signifies, first, the activation of energy, with the resultant movement of muscles or limbs. By practice of Self-Realization Fellowship techniques, the student learns to concentrate principally upon the motivating element: Energy.

Relaxation (*laxo*, "to release"; *re*, "again"): to release by an act of will the energy employed in a muscle or body part that has been tensed high or low.

Tension: sending energy into a muscle with the deliberate intention of causing that muscle to tense or contract. Just as you can switch light on or off in a light bulb, so by operating the switch of will power you can switch energy on or off in the lamps of the muscles.

IMPORTANT Read again very carefully the experiment on energy and will. Most people think that a human being is composed of only a physical body and mind; but essentially each human being is composed of:

- 1) consciousness
- 2) life energy
- 3) flesh

There are three principles involved in the act of the tension of a muscle:

- 1) The will, which sends energy to a particular body part.

- 2) The energy, which can tense the bundle of fibers in a muscle into stony hardness.
- 3) The muscle, which is tensed by energy and will.

We only know the lightness or heaviness of a weight from the feeling of how much energy we are expending. Remember, the relation between will and energy is:

"The greater the will, the greater the amount of energy and tension in any body part."

LESSON NO. 7 All true spiritual scriptures have a threefold meaning, to suit the physical, mental, and spiritual needs of man.

IMPORTANT Specially study the five stages of mental relaxation described in Lesson 7. Also the special kinds of relaxation.

Relaxation means the releasing of energy and consciousness from the muscles in any of the following ways:

1. Imperfect muscular relaxation.
2. Partial muscular relaxation.
3. Unconscious sensory-motor organic relaxation--withdrawal of consciousness and energy from the senses, as in sleep.
4. Conscious sensory-motor relaxation--conscious withdrawal of energy and consciousness from the muscles and the senses by concentration, at will.
5. Unconscious perfect sensory-motor-organic relaxation--death--or the unconscious forced withdrawal of the energy and consciousness from the muscles, heart, spine, and brain.
6. Conscious sensory-motor-organic relaxation--higher meditation--in which one may consciously and at will withdraw the life energy from the muscles, senses, heart, spine, brain, and medulla oblongata, or from the entire body, thereby releasing it into the Infinite Dynamo of consciousness and energy, just as one might switch off electricity from a light bulb, permitting the electricity to return to the dynamo that produced it.

After death, we cannot switch on again the life in the body lamp. But by learning the method of conscious sensory-motor-organic relaxation, we may switch off life from the body while we are yet living, and "switch it on" again at will. In other words, we can "die" and "live" again at will, even as Jesus did.

LESSON NO. 8 This Lesson on energization contains the key principles upon which the SRF Recharging Exercises are based. Review by reading this Lesson once every week until you thoroughly know and understand these principles and can successfully do the exercises. Every day upon waking, while still in bed, practice very slowly, with eyes closed, the exercises given in Lesson 8 under the subtitles of "Relaxing Exercise" and "The Technique of Energization." Practice these exercises also any time that you are tired. The more you practice these exercises slowly and with concentration, the more you will realize, by tension and relaxation of energy from the body, that you are not just so many pounds of flesh, but rather the energy and consciousness tied in the nerves, muscles, organs, and bones by the cords of attachment. By realizing yourself as the energy in the body and not as the flesh, you prepare the way for releasing your little caged life into the Infinite Life. These exercises also awaken deeper consciousness and greater energy in all body cells. A student of Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons should not think of himself as a fleshly body, but as the light in the body bulb, ready to be switched off or consciously released into the Infinite Light, or switched on again in the limiting body bulb.

Some people know less than others, owing to wrong thinking somewhere, sometime in the near or distant past. Their present limitations are self-created and not due to God's partiality. Break the bonds of self-created limitations and let the flood of will power drive away all weaknesses that enshroud the soul.

LESSON NO. 8-A Read over the instructions to the exercises, checking to see that you are practicing them correctly. Practice the Recharging Exercises faithfully every morning and night as a regular part of your spiritual routine.

LESSON NO. 9 The student should maintain a balance between the Eastern mode of meditation and the characteristically Western habit of intense activity. Affirm often:

"I will be calmly active, actively calm. I am a prince of peace, sitting on the throne of poise, directing the kingdom of my activity."

To be too calm is to be lazy; to be too active is to become an automaton. Meditate or fall asleep when you feel overwhelmed with trials. Note the different forms of mental relaxation. Mental relaxation signifies mental rest.

Free your mind from haunting worries by imitating the state of drowsiness. Keep your breath calm, your character steady. With self-control at your command, commune with God in meditation; and, whenever you seek company, be in the best spiritual company you can find.

Metaphysical relaxation consists in freeing one's mind from the body, money, possessions, name, fame, family, country, the world, and the habits of the human race. Every night in sleep we are separated from all bodily habits; but these limitations come back to us when we

return from the subconscious state of sleep and again enter into wakeful consciousness. By complete, ecstatic communion with God, all bodily attachments are destroyed. Then man, whether asleep or awake, consciously realizes his oneness with the Father.

TENSION AND PHYSICAL RELAXATION The greatest technique of physical relaxation is to tense the whole body and then relax, exhaling the breath, casting away all restless thoughts. Remain as long as you can in this positive calm state, without the interruption of restless thoughts, and remain without breathing as long as there is no strain. This is very, very important to remember: never hold the breath to the point of discomfort or strain.

In the morning, while you are still in bed, practice the tension and relaxation of each of the twenty body parts; then after you are out of bed, practice again.

Read over the instructions and then thoroughly master the art of practicing low, medium, and high tension. Remember that low tension signifies a low charge of energy sent into a body part; medium and high tension signify the influx of more energy into the body part.

IMPORTANT Remember that when a muscle or a body part is fully tensed, you have charged that part with maximum energy. This signifies that you should not tense any more, for the same reason that you should not send 2000 volts of current into a 50-watt lamp. Just as a ship at sea can be operated by radio without the help of any of the crew, so the ships of human minds and bodies are operated by God's cosmic energy shooting through the cosmos and vibrating in the antenna of the medulla oblongata, or the "mouth of God." The will receives the light of God through the medulla, and stores it up in the brain and six spinal plexuses. The intelligent energy in the brain and the plexuses carries on the functioning of all the many trillions of body cells, and the intricate workings of the bodily organs.

LESSON NO. 10 Behind the screen of sleepland lies the mystery of the vast, formless, omnipotent, omnipresent soul, a reflection of Spirit. Every night God disassociates your consciousness, possessions, race, good or bad qualities, and your body from your formless, happy, ever-existent soul.

In sleep you do not remember whether you are Hindu or American, man or woman, sick or well, rich or poor; and yet when you wake up you know that you existed consciously and happily without the consciousness of the body. If you were unconscious during sleep, then upon waking you could not possibly say: "Oh I slept well," or, "Oh, I had a very light, restless sleep," because you would not remember. In sleepland you partially realize your real nature: that you are formless, that you are limitless as space, that you are happiness. This recollection during sleep helps you to realize the forgotten image of God within you.

In a dream you can be a king, or a master, or an archangel; all the limitations of space and time and of human desires that infest earthly

existence are removed. Some dreams have significance, being filmed by the superconscious, all-seeing mind, and then played upon the screen of your dream movie house. Other dreams that are shown to you by your subconscious mind may be meaningless pictures, merely a result of worried or restless activity.

God shows you by dreams that you can materialize your thoughts into sensations, feeling, and all earthly experiences, by the power of your subconscious mind. When you can materialize thoughts into dreams, you will realize how God materialized His thoughts into the dream of earth and cosmos. Earth and cosmos are nothing but materialized dream-thoughts of God. By knowing this cosmos as God's dream, you can be free from birth and death, sorrow and pleasure, poverty and prosperity--for you will realize that all these dualities are untrue, like dream experiences. Upon waking from a dream, you realize the falsity of both good and bad dream experiences. Similarly, upon waking in cosmic consciousness, you will realize that you were only dreaming your existence as a human being.

LESSON NO. 11 Fostering the desire for luxuries is the surest way to lose money and cause unhappiness. Differentiate between your real needs and unnecessary "necessities." Happiness can be had by exercising self-control in everything.

Desirelessness is not negative. It signifies that you should be able to forsake the troublemaking, short-lasting desires of bodily and earthly existence for the superior, everlasting happiness of the soul. It is the vision of wisdom that directs you to seek soul happiness instead of sense happiness.

What is God and how can we know Him? God is the ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-increasing, ever-new joy of meditation. Because God is ever-increasing, ever-new joy, we should all the more seek Him rather than temptation and sense happiness. God can be known and felt tangibly as the ever-increasing joy of deep and deeper meditation. Those who meditate only a little while do not know the indescribable happiness that springs forth like a cataract from the cleft of really deep meditation. To know God you must meditate intensely, as well as long; and regularly; and whenever you have spare time. The incoming happiness you will feel will let you know beyond doubt that it will consciously guide you in all things through your intuition. Of course it is better to meditate a little, even irregularly, than not to meditate at all--for by so doing you may gradually be encouraged to meditate more often and to make deeper dives into Spirit.

SPECIAL NOTE You will learn the scientific way of communing with God in the second step of the SRF Lessons.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP ONE

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 6

1. The body is said to be a "bundle of motions." Describe the different sorts of motion of which it is composed.
2. How can you hold Infinite Spirit in the cup of your consciousness?
3. What is the difference between mechanical exercises and the SRF art of energization?
4. Describe the importance of will in energizing the body.
5. How would you show the difference between will power and energy?

Lesson 7

1. What is the threefold significance of true scriptures?
2. What is the test of mental relaxation? of physical relaxation?
3. What are the five stages of mental relaxation?
4. What are the stages of physical relaxation?

Lesson 8

1. (a) By what experiment can you show that energization requires both will and energy?
(b) Recall the two experiments that show the difference between mechanically produced muscle movements, and will-produced muscle movements.
2. What are the three degrees of tension used in most of the SRF Recharging Exercises, particularly in the twenty-part Technique of Energization exercise described in this Lesson?
(Also given as No. 20 in the exercises described in Lesson Supplement 8-A.)
3. Describe in detail, naming the twenty body parts, how you practice the Technique of Energization exercises given in this Lesson:
(a) tensing the whole body at once.
(b) tensing and relaxing the twenty body parts in sequence given.
4. What important points do you keep in mind while practicing these?

Lesson 9

1. What is mental relaxation? metaphysical relaxation?
2. What is physical relaxation?
3. What routine should you follow immediately upon awakening in the morning?
4. What is the best method of attaining physical relaxation?
5. Describe the meditation exercise of "spreading ripples of peace."

Lesson 10

1. What do dreams teach us about the nature of worldly suffering?
2. What do your dreams tell you about yourself?
3. How real is matter?
4. How can the soul be resurrected from the bonds of materiality?
5. How can dreams be consciously induced?

Lesson 11

1. Why is self-control the way to true happiness?
2. What is God?
3. What is the surest sign that He exists?

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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 12 Look at life unmasked. Observe the perpetual current of emotions and thoughts that arise within you. Examine the heart of your aspirations, ideals, hopes, and despairs. Analyze the root of your cravings. Life manifests itself through these channels, and so it is that these fundamentals demand understanding, through intelligence, wisdom, and love.

From the emotions, the feeling in your heart, arise both thought and action. Quicker than thought is the action that springs from feeling. But the mind must view this as a spectator, and retain control.

Sorrow has no objective existence, no being of its own. It does not arise out of the conditions of life; it is not inherent in conditions. It is born of spiritual ignorance and the infirmities of the mind. Essentially, conditions are neither good nor bad; they are always neutral, seeming to be depressing or encouraging, according to the understanding attitude of mind of the individual.

Duty is not imposed upon man by some superior power. It is the inherent urge of life toward progression; therefore, duty calls for attention and intelligent action. Every problem that waits for a solution at your hand is a solemn duty imposed upon you by life itself. Any escape from problems, physical or mental, is not an escape from life, but only delays your progress and is a source of further discomfort and evil.

Anger defeats its own purpose. It usually arises out of a feeling of ineffectualness, inability to impose one's own will, or selfishness of one form or another. It is a poison both physical and mental. Its method is that of fools, for it is a destroyer of peace and harmony, and arouses wrath, resistance, and resentment in others. When you recognize anger coming over you, know it instantly for what it is--that is half the battle won. Control your speech, saying nothing. Be alone for a few minutes if possible. Think of the offender as your brother who has acted in ignorance and whom in your heart you really love. Protect your peace by calmness. Destroy anger by metaphysical reason, for ignorance is the mother of anger. It is also helpful to take a cold shower, or apply ice or cold water to the medulla oblongata, temples, between the eyebrows, and on top of the head.

Knowledge and training can be imparted from one person to another through the subconsciousness during the sleep state. It can be imparted

to an unborn baby through the subconsciousness of the mother. In the wakeful conscious state, people learn and absorb the vibrations through the specific company they keep and through conscious will. Spiritually developed parents could bring about heaven on earth by bringing into the world only spiritual children. That is a personal responsibility.

LESSON NO. 13 Rules for acquiring prosperity:

1. Cut down luxuries.
2. Think of yourself and, by meditation, know yourself as a child of God.
3. Think of all nationalities as your brothers.
4. Most important of all, seek prosperity for others and they will seek prosperity for you.

Develop the power of concentration by regular practice of the techniques with great personal zeal. By concentration you learn to create at will what you need. Develop one hundred percent efficiency by practicing the art of concentration. Your prosperity will be measured according to the degree and power of your concentration.

Read carefully and practice the meditation entitled "God's will and your will." Pray after meditation, when the mind is under control, and pray unceasingly until God responds to you through vision or through your deep intuition.

In only a very limited way can the conscious or subconscious mind create a new cause of success in anything. But the superconscious mind has unlimited power to create success, as it is not governed by any limitation, but by the boundless power of God.

LESSON NO. 14 Humbleness is the valley of beauty where the waters of divine wisdom gather to inundate the dry tracts of the human soul. Avoid an inferiority complex, for it means that you underestimate your powers; and avoid the attitude of superiority, for that means you overestimate your powers. Be natural; become great in humbleness and become great by effort and will power.

Egotists refuse to investigate truth; humble men are always ready to learn. Egotism shuts out higher knowledge and rebuffs the desire of the wise to help you for your own good; whereas by humbleness you will attract all kinds of wisdom to yourself. Besides, egotism only makes one appear big in one's own eyes; and very much less in the eyes of others. Humbleness makes one look big in the eyes of others. To have personality requires a conviction of truth and the courage to utter it, but it does not mean the possession of repulsive egotism. Egotism slaps wisdom in the face; humbleness entreats the lotus feet of truth to enter the innermost sanctuary of the soul.

God, the knower of all things and possessor of all things, is not egotistical. Hence, all those who want to be powerful like Him must be free of egotism.

Jesus said: "He that is least among you all, the same shall be great" (Luke 9:48). You have also heard the proverb: "An empty vessel makes a loud sound." The Hindu scriptures say: "In shallow men the fish of little thoughts cause much commotion. In oceanic minds the whales of inspiration make hardly a ruffle." One philosopher rightly said, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." It often makes one inclined to egotistical display. The wise are so engrossed in their wisdom that they have no time for interminable "revelations."

Sow hate and you will reap hate. Sow love in all hearts and you will reap love everywhere. Every work is selfish. Even when we serve others, we do so to relieve ourselves of the pain that we feel when we see others suffer. Resurrect your soul from the dream of frailties. To acknowledge defeat is greater defeat.

Meditation is the only portal through which you can escape from all your troubles to infinite freedom. Meditation is the way to forget God's delusive dream of matter, and to remember and realize the forgotten image of God within you.

LESSON NO. 15 Do not use your body, mind, or soul for perishable pleasures, but use them for attaining the unending joys of Spirit. Repeat to yourself the prayer at the beginning of Lesson 15. Always affirm any prayer understandingly, with ever-increasing devotion at each repetition. Your soul should approach nearer to God with each thoughtful repetition of a prayer or affirmation.

Remember, you often do not do what you wish to do, but what your habits compel you to do. Good habits are automatic psychological machines, which do not require the effort of will in performing specific actions; they help to make easy the performance of these actions. Bad habits that compel you to do evil should be destroyed.

Though habits are compelling, yet you must remember that it is you who create them. If you can create bad habits, you can dislodge them by creating good habits. A habit grows from the repetition of an inner thought or in response to some outward company. Therefore, if you want to break an evil habit, change your bad company to good company, and substitute good thoughts for evil thoughts. You can never break a bad habit if you keep feeding it by bad company, wrong thoughts, and evil actions. Remember the temptation of bodily pleasures--never fed, they are ever satisfied, and ever fed, they are never satisfied.

THE POWER A specific type of company, or a specific thought repeatedly presented to the mind, influences the will, feeling, brain, and muscular mechanism of the body. Recordlike grooves are formed in the subconscious mind, which by memory and the medium of attention repeats the playing of the record of a mental habit. To yield to your bad habits is to make your enemies stronger. To yield to good habits is to strengthen your friendly forces, which help you to do good without effort.

Cultivate the spiritual habit of meditating with zeal, and you will

reach God easily. Remember, you are the sole creator of your good or bad habits. Till the soil of your mind with discipline.

Above all, remember:

1. Form the habit of deep meditation.
2. Form the habit of doing good to others.
3. Form the habit of being moderate in everything. Cultivate a good character.
4. Form the habit of eating properly; taking enough exercise; and planning healthy, wholesome undertakings.
5. Form the habit of making practical, creative efforts that produce the necessary prosperity.

Remember the spiritual law of habit, and do not let material habits crowd out spiritual habits. Good habits must work in harmony, so that they cooperate to work for your highest good. Never neglect the most important habit of meditating for a less important habit of eating, or of doing something unimportant.

LESSON NO. 16 The following is a short definition that you should always remember:

Concentration is the power to focus the mind on any desired line of thought.

Meditation is concentration used only to know God.

Concentrate and meditate early upon waking and before going to bed, or anytime you are free. Fill in the gaps of leisure hours with meditation.

If you can be quiet anywhere, meditate anywhere; but if noises distract you, try to select a quiet place, or wait for the silence of the night, for meditation. Or create your own silence by closing the ears when meditating. Act ambitiously, discharging your necessary duties with your mind constantly meditating upon God. Select a little room, or a screened-off corner with harmonious vibrations, for your meditations. Sit on a woolen blanket spread over an armless chair, facing the east, when meditating.

METHODS OF CONTROLLING THE SEX FORCE

1. Keep the mind busy with good activities and meditation.
2. Keep the vital fluid transmuted into muscular and brain energy. Don't waste it in bad company.
3. Keep the breath calm by eating less carbon-producing foods, and by entirely abstaining from beef, veal, and pork products.

If the mind is calm, sex and breath will be under control. If character is good, breath and mind will be calm. If you have breath control by the technique we shall teach, then mind and sex will be under control. If you disturb any one of the three, you will disturb the others. Disturb sex control, and mind and breath will be restless.

Do not sleep too much. Practice meditation long and with intensity. On Sundays and holidays, meditate in the early morning from 6 to 9, and at night from 9 to 12. Regular meditation should be at least one half hour in the morning, one or two hours before going to bed, and meditate deeply whenever you can in between. Do not be discouraged if it is not easy to meditate long in the beginning. Just keep practicing, extending the time a little more each day, until you are able to sit long in meditation without even thinking of time.

LESSON NO. 17 While in church, do not concentrate upon the social conclave, noises around the church, or individuals making a disturbance, but concentrate upon inner peace and on the sermon being preached. God talks to you through the voice of silence and peace in meditation, if you don't drown out His voice by the noise of your passions. With the whip of intuition, drive away the money-changers of material desires and restlessness from the temple of meditation, which is the real house of God.

Whatever your vocation may be--that of a businessman, a spiritual aspirant, a housekeeper, an artist--you can increase your efficiency one hundred percent by the regular, deep practice of meditation. Don't let anything interfere. This is what Jesus meant by: "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off....If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out" (Mark 9:43, 47).

Life force in the nerves keeps the soul entangled with the messages of the sensations in eyes, ears, hands, and so forth. When life force is plucked from the eyes and cut off from the hands and the consciousness of the body, then its direction is reversed and it becomes focused on the omnipresent God. Concentration means freeing the attention from sensations, present thoughts, and memory thoughts by consciously switching off the life force from the sensory-motor nerves, thus preventing thought-rousing sensations from reaching the brain. This detachment of the mind from body consciousness is similar to that experienced in sleep, except that one remains consciously aware.

Thousands of persons pray in churches and don't know why they do so, or why they don't get an answer to their prayers. If they knew the law of God-contact, they would easily be able to commune with Him.

LESSON NO. 18 Read again and again the explanation of concentration. When you try to concentrate upon one thing, you usually find that soon you have forgotten all about it and are thinking about everything else but the original object of your concentration. This is often experienced when you are thinking of a domestic problem at home or a business problem at the office, or a spiritual problem in the church. Forget the old method of concentration by diversion, and learn the scientific method of concentration. Remove the causes of disturbances that affect your concentration and apply the scientifically freed attention on anything you wish--material or divine.

LESSON NO. 19 God reveals Himself to those who develop their inner powers and use the laws of concentration and meditation. By using the law of thermal-control, heating systems have been in-

vented. By controlling life force and the power of concentration, God can be discovered. But remember, though God can be approached through law only, still He, being above law, cannot be compelled to reveal Himself to the true seeker by the mere force of the law of concentration. Devotion or surrender of the Son-Soul to the Father-Spirit is necessary for the devotee demanding absolute surrender of God. God can escape the small nets of discrimination, pure activity, or concentration, but He cannot escape the net of devotion. When the devotee completely gives himself to God, then God has to do likewise. God is very exacting when divine laws are concerned, but He is forgetful and becomes intoxicated and relaxed when He is given the nectar-wine of devotion. God loves to drink devotion from the secret winepress of the devotee's heart.

Approach God with the song of smiles. Silence signifies the silencing of one's thoughts as well as one's tongue. That is really possible during sleep; therefore it can be done during wakefulness also, by practice of higher methods of concentration. There are threefold disturbances:

- (1) sensations;
- (2) thoughts aroused by sensations;
- (3) past memory thoughts roused by present thoughts.

Read very carefully the pages in this Lesson about sensations.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STEP 1

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 12

1. Why do emotions affect one's life?
2. What is the source of sorrow?
3. Should duties and problems be avoided?
4. Explain how to overcome anger.
5. Explain how to overcome fear.
6. In what three ways may knowledge and training be imparted to the subconscious mind?

Lesson 13

1. What are the four rules of prosperity?
2. How would you harmonize your will with God's will?

Lesson 14

1. What is the difference between humbleness and egotism?
2. What is the best way to change others?
3. Is the law of service to others founded wholly on unselfishness?
4. How does the ego keep the soul earth-bound?

Lesson 15

1. What are habits?
2. Why do people indulge in evil?
3. What is the best way to overcome bad habits?

Lesson 16

1. What is the difference between concentration and meditation?
2. What is your most important environment?
3. Does seeking God imply neglect of physical duties?
4. What are the best times of day to meditate?
5. What is the relation between breath, life force, mind, sex energy? How can one discipline them?

Lesson 17

1. If a person has a natural ability to concentrate, why should he learn the technique of concentration?

Lesson 18

1. Define concentration.
2. What did Jesus mean, in regard to the life force, when he said "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out"?

Lesson 19

1. Is "going into the silence" enough to contact God?
2. What are the three disturbances to the mind in meditation?

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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LESSON SUMMARIES

LESSON NO. 20 The state of sleep proves that when the life force and consciousness are switched off from the five telephones of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing, the attention is freed from distracting sensations, sensation-roused thoughts, and thought-roused memory thoughts. Self-Realization Fellowship teaches you how to consciously switch off the life force from the five nerve-wires of the senses. If you can do this by regularly practicing the technique, then no sensation-roused thoughts can disturb your mind. If sensations stopped cropping up in the brain, thoughts would not arise, and if thoughts stopped arising then memory-thoughts would not be awakened. In sleep, as soon as sensations stop reaching the brain, the conscious thoughts and the buried subconscious thoughts stop their activities; so by the conscious process of this technique, the same results can be accomplished. An attention free from disturbances is ready to be successfully used in material or spiritual accomplishment.

It is not only the yogis of India (yoga means "union" and a yogi is a person who scientifically tries to unite his soul with God) that have proved this. For St. Paul said: "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ (Consciousness)... I die daily (withdraw the life force from the heart, or die and live again at will)."

When the heart involuntarily stops beating, one dies; his life is switched off from the five sense-telephones of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing. In sleep also, owing to the slowed-down action of the heart, a state of partial "death" or switching off of the energy from the nerve-telephones is accomplished. Death is the permanent, unconscious, involuntary switching off of the life force from the five sense-telephones. Sleep is a temporary, unconscious, involuntary switching off of the life force from the five sense telephones by an unconscious method. Self-Realization Fellowship techniques offer a conscious way of withdrawing life force partially (from the senses, muscles, and heart) or completely (from the entire body, as in death); and of then reinstalling it in the senses, muscles, and heart, or into the entire "lifeless" body. In sleep, life energy retires from the sensory-motor nerves and from the muscles into the heart and spine. In death, the life force and consciousness leave the body. But by the SRF technique of concentration, one can switch life force on or off at will from any part of the body or from the entire body. The purpose of the technique is to quiet the heart so that the life force and consciousness may be withdrawn from sensory channels and redirected to the higher centers of consciousness in the brain.

Restlessness, worry, wrong eating, overwork, strenuous activity, will cause the heart to beat and work fast. Calmness, calmness-producing food, and moderate activities are conducive to making the heart calm.

CONCENTRATION BY QUIETING THE HEART When you practice the concentration lesson, sit calmly, suspending all bodily activities (from the diaphragm, circulatory organs, lungs, and so forth) by practicing the Hong-Sau Technique of watching the breath.

When motion is temporarily halted in the outer and inner body, the deterioration of the cells stops and no venous blood accrues. When venous blood ceases to accumulate, the heart slows down, for it no longer has to send the dark, impure venous blood into the lungs to be purified.

When the heart is not given the work of pumping blood, the energy that ordinarily is engaged in keeping the heart pumping slows down and begins to flow back toward the brain, instead of outward into the five sense-telephones. When this happens, the life force automatically withdraws itself, as in sleep, from the muscles and the five sense-telephones and retires toward the brain. The life force is then switched off from the senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch; sensations are unable to attract the attention of the brain.

Thus freed from disturbances of sensations and thoughts, the attention becomes ready to be focused wholly on whatever material or spiritual object of thought one chooses.

Every night in sleep we unconsciously practice concentration by quieting the heart. The yogi learns, in addition, to practice concentration by quieting the heart consciously, as you have been taught in the technique of watching the breath, the SRF Hong-Sau Technique of Concentration.

Do not be frightened about quieting the heart, for by the conscious technique one uses the calmness of meditation as a brake to slow down the heart. Entertain no fear when the heart slows down. To quiet the heart is natural. The hearts of elderly people are quieted by nature after passing through periods of restless childhood and turbulent youth and active middle age.

It takes long practice to quiet the heart consciously. So long as one depends on food to sustain the body, he cannot calm the heart permanently. Meditation is the conscious way of switching the life force in the body on or off. The Self-Realization Fellowship Hong-Sau Technique teaches concentration, not by diversion of the mind from the senses to God, but by withdrawal not only of the mind but also of the life force, which is the medium of sense disturbances, from the five sense-telephones. Then the soul, being individualized Spirit, can manifest all the fulfillment and satisfaction of the Spirit.

Spirit is ever-existing, ever-conscious, ever-new Bliss. The one light under the perforated gas burner can be compared to the Spirit behind the pores of human consciousness. The little lights running

through the pores can be compared to human souls, which are emanations of the one Spirit.

LESSON NO. 21 Life force is the power that directly sustains the body. Oxygen and food are converted into energy by life force, and are powers that indirectly support the body. If life force fails to digest food and convert it into energy, then the body cannot live. When electricity is missing from your automobile battery, adding more distilled water to it will not help. You must send it to be recharged. So also when your vitality is low and your health fails in spite of all health and dietetic precautions, then you must know how to recharge your body with life force by will power and the inner way, instead of simply eating good food and going to health resorts for a cure. Breathlessness is deathlessness. Breath is the cord which ties the soul to the body. Conquer it and you will be free.

HONG-SAU TECHNIQUE

1. Face East, sitting on a blanket spread over a straight armless chair.
2. Sit upright, chest out, shoulder blades together, hands resting palms upward at the juncture of thighs and abdominal region.
3. With eyelids closed, or half-closed, focus your gaze and attention at the point between the eyebrows.
4. Expel breath quickly three times. Then wait for breath to come in.
5. Watch breath as it flows in. Let it come naturally. Do not draw it in or force it out by any act of will.
6. As often as the breath flows in, mentally chant "Hong" for the duration of that inhalation. Whether inhalation comes quickly or slowly, and whether it is long or short, follow the foregoing procedure of chanting "Hong" mentally, making no sound or movement of the tongue.
7. If the breath "stays in" and there is no desire to exhale, wait, enjoying the feeling of peace; as soon as the breath flows out, naturally, of its own accord, mentally chant "Sau," making no sound or use of the lips or tongue.
8. If the breath stays out, wait until there is desire for inhalation, enjoying meanwhile the peace of the breathless state. When it flows in again, mentally chant "Hong" for the duration of the in-flowing breath. And when the breath goes out again, of its own accord, without force or act of will, mentally chant "Sau" until it is fully out.

Continue repeating the foregoing as long as you wish. By keeping his attention riveted to one thing at a time--the breath--the yogi is able to separate himself from the breath; then he realizes that he is neither the body nor the breath, but the consciousness and intelligence in the body. He beholds himself as a soul.

THE MEANING OF HONG-SAU "Hong" is the vibration of the ingoing breath. "Sau" is the vibration of the outgoing breath. Just as the word "peace" produces calmness in the mind and body, and as the word "anger" vibrates wrath, so the chanting of "Hong" and "Sau" calms the breath quickly, as that is its astral vibration.

WHAT IS SLEEP? Sleep is unconscious sensory-motor relaxation, in which the life force and consciousness are unconsciously switched off from the lamp of the muscles and senses. To die daily, as mentioned in the Bible, is to switch the life energy in the bodily lamp off and on again consciously and at will. The switched off energy in the yogi's body-lamp retires to the dynamo of Spirit, from whence he summons it again at will.

BEST TIMES TO MEDITATE Meditate between 5 and 6 a.m.; 11 a.m. and 12 p.m.; 5 and 6 p.m.; 10 p.m. and 12 a.m.; or between 11 p.m. and 12 a.m. Naturally if one's schedule does not permit meditating at exactly these hours, select the nearest time to these periods that is possible. Also, if one cannot meditate four times a day, then he should try to meditate twice in the morning, and once before going to bed at night, and during any leisure hours.

LESSON NO. 22 Control of the vital essence is conducive to physical and mental well-being. To have good character and control over the sex urge is extremely important to one who seeks communion with the Supreme Being. God created the divine ecstasy of meditation. Satanic ignorance created pseudo substitutes for them--sex temptation and wine. Sex should be used only for creative purposes; hence wine is the greatest tool of the evil force, as it obliterates wisdom and discrimination and encourages the misuse of sex. Wine and all drugs should be completely forsaken. You must have moderation first and then renunciation if you are gripped by the sex habit, or the dope or wine habit. "When wealth is lost, little is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost."

Control your mind. Don't do anything against the dictates of your conscience and discrimination, just because you wish to do it. Learn to resist evil by will power. Do everything that it is your duty to do. Calm the breath and creative force by the power of your mind. Mind is the operator of all your powers.

The person who tries to concentrate by harmonizing breath, life force and vital essence gets quicker results than the person who meditates without disciplining breath by technique, or without controlling character and sex life by strong will power and reason.

Please remember that without an erect spine during concentration and meditation you will lose half the good result in attaining control and peace. This is very important.

Read the instructions for practice of the Hong-Sau Technique of Concentration again and again. It is very important to follow the instructions. Remember, whether the breath comes in slowly or quickly during a

natural inhalation, mentally (without whisper or tremor of tongue, or sound from the lips) chant "Hong" for the duration of the inhalation. If the breath does not come out, wait, and when it comes out of itself, quickly or slowly, mentally chant "Sau" as an accompaniment. If the breath does not go in at once, wait until it does go in of itself. Keep on repeating this.

POSITION OF EYES Try to practice the concentration technique with the eyes half open, gently focused at the point between the eyebrows. In the subconscious state of sleep the eyes are closed. During the wakeful or conscious state you keep your eyes open. In superconsciousness (consciously enjoying an ever-increasing joyous state, as in sleep) the eyes should be half open, fixed at the point between the eyebrows. This is the center of Christ Consciousness, and the eyes of sleeping children, and those of dying people usually turn up to it. Since meditation and concentration consist in switching the consciousness and nerve force toward God through the medulla oblongata (mouth of God), one should learn to concentrate the eyes at the point between the eyebrows (Christ-consciousness center), which is the reflection of the light of the medulla, during meditation.

As you like to close your eyes in order to be in the subconscious, or to open them in order to be consciously working through the eyes, you will love infinitely more to look up into the spiritual eye, situated at the point between the eyebrows, when you get used to it. Practice without straining the eyes, but practice you should, always concentrating at the point between the eyebrows.

LESSON NO. 23 Study the delicate art of breathing and breath-control. Our purpose is to teach proper breathing (as long as we have to breathe some way!). Remember the following important points:

- (a) The purpose of watching the breath is to increase naturally the intervals when breath does not flow. Watch breath in order to do away with it.
- (b) Mentally chant "Hong-Sau" with the ingoing and outgoing breath as it naturally flows, without using will power. Concentrate on, enjoy, and identify yourself with the state when the breath does not flow, as a result of practicing the technique of watching the breath.
- (c) The more you watch the breath (as taught in the technique, with deep attention) the less you will breathe, remaining breathless more of the time. This will calm the heart and consequently increase longevity.
- (d) By watching breath, you learn how to separate your watching soul metaphysically from body, breath, and the processes of consciousness.

Learn to live directly by Cosmic Energy coming through the medulla oblongata, and not by breath only or food only. Prevent oxygen starvation by practicing the special breathing exercise given in this Lesson.

LESSON NO. 24 Nervousness implies that one has been tampering with the nerve wires and the electricity of life which runs the entire body factory. Hence you cannot afford to be nervous. Avoid the psychological and physical causes of nervousness described in this Lesson. Calm company, inner calmness achieved through meditation and eating plenty of fruit are the best antidotes for nervousness.

LESSON NO. 25 Be inwardly happy always, retaining and remembering the happiness born of meditation. This will make you outwardly happy too. Guard your happiness from the robbers of cranky, crabby, sorrow-loving, nervous people. Remember, no one can make you unhappy if you refuse to allow him to do so. Happiness can be achieved by meditating long and regularly, above all else, and by adopting those actions that generate happiness. Ignorant people, like animals, do not quickly remove the causes that make unhappiness. Avoid gossiping as you would avoid poison. Cultivate the habit of discussing the good in people with those whom you love. Good thoughts attract the good in people. Evil thoughts attract evil.

Judge not others, only yourself. It is easy to gossip about others, but try gossiping about yourself for a while and see how you like it. Whenever you feel like talking about others, try talking loudly about your own secret weaknesses and faults before your enemies and friends. You won't like this. Correct yourself first. Make your home a valley of smiles, blossoming with happiness. The breeze of your constant divine smile can keep the lives of those you love throbbing with joy and filled with blessings.

REVIEW QUESTIONS--STEP ONE

(FOR YOUR PERSONAL REVIEW ONLY; NOT TO BE SENT TO MOTHER CENTER)

Lesson 20

1. What is the difference between the sleep state and the state produced by concentration?
2. What must be done if one would switch off the life force from the five senses, scientifically and consciously?
3. What did St. Paul mean when he said "I die daily"?
4. What is the soul?
5. What makes the heart restless? What quiets it?
6. Describe the various stages of body and mind when decay is consciously removed from the outer and inner body.

Lesson 21

1. Describe in detail the technique of concentration.
2. Why does watching the breath produce concentration?

Lesson 22

1. Why is it beneficial to gain control over the creative urge?
2. What breathing exercise should be practiced before Hong-Sau?
3. What keeps sensations from reaching the brain after deep practice of this technique?

Lesson 23

1. In practicing Hong-Sau is it important to concentrate on the intervals when breath does not flow, or simply watch breath?
2. Should you in any way control breath during this practice?
3. What is the effect of a quiet mind upon the heart?
4. What is the cord that ties the soul to the flesh?

Lesson 24

1. Define nervousness.
2. What causes nervousness?

Lesson 25

1. Upon what does happiness chiefly depend?
2. When should you give your acquaintances your advice?

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE BLUE-RAYED LOTUS OF THY FEET

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Mother, the bee of my mind is engrossed in the blue-rayed lotus of Thy feet. I drink the nectar of Thy tender love. This royal bee of Thine sips only from the blossom that exudes Thy perfume.

Denying myself the honey of sense pleasures, flying far above ephemeral gardens of idle fancy, at last I have found Thine ambrosial lotus of light

I was Thy busy bee, wandering in the fields of incarnations, attracted by odors from flowers of countless experiences. I roam no more, for Thy fragrance has quenched the perfume thirst of my soul.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

I shall drink the everlasting nectar of joy found in the fountain of meditation. O Father, from joy I come; for joy I live; in joy dost Thou melt me!

HOW TO CONTACT GOD THROUGH MEDITATION--Part 1

DEFINITION Meditation is that specific form of concentration which is applied only in connection with consciously tuning in with Cosmic Consciousness--the home of cosmic supply. By this method, the proficient student can not only finally attain everything that the power of attention can and should accomplish, but can also develop the power to control his destiny, and prevent failure and disease. This method teaches one how to reinforce, revitalize, and strengthen the human faculty with the faculty of superconsciousness, through faithful, persevering practice.

Meditation is the pickax that pries up all the covers of consciousness, and brings forth the fountain of God's ever new joy. Meditation--complete relaxation or conscious withdrawal of the mind from the restless senses--is the only way to know God. Even though you may be able to do everything else but meditate, you will never find joy to equal that which comes when the thoughts are silent and your mind is tuned to the peace of God. If you ask, "How do I know there is such joy as you describe?" this is my testimony: if you practice meditation every day, deeply and consistently, you will find that ever existing, ever conscious, ever new joy, ever increasingly manifest within you. And with practice it will stay with you in activity and in silence alike--even in sleep. It is a joy that will constantly guide you to right action in everything and will respond to your prayers. You have to demonstrate that for yourself. And this is my further testimony: that, once God's joy has been found, all desires for other gain will dwindle in comparison. Your consciousness will expand. You will be able to stand unshaken amidst jarring trials. The whole world will not be able to lure you to forsake the bliss that you will find in meditation. You will enjoy all other things in that divine joy. Because Jesus had experienced this he could say: "Get thee behind me, Satan!" The satanic temptation of material desires fell dead before his joy in God.

**MEDITATE BY THE
RIGHT METHOD** Completeness in God is by no means negation of ordinary life and its responsibilities and joys; finding God is positive attainment that elevates and beautifies all life. Human existence, however pleasant, is only a bubble of laughter; in God it becomes the sea of mirth. "Thou, O God, art the ocean, and I, a tiny bubble of laughter, have become the sea of mirth!"

You can find this joyous perception of the Divine only by the right method of concentration and meditation. If you are looking at the ceiling of your room for the door, you could seek for years and years but

you would never find it until you adopted the right method and looked for it in the wall.

When your desire for God is sincere, He sends a right vehicle: a spiritual teacher or guru preceptor through whom He teaches you the art of meditation or divine communion that leads to realization of and oneness with Him. When Jesus said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," he was speaking of the Christ Consciousness within. The joy that comes in meditation is proof of the existence of that ever newly joyous God. Since I learned this, oftentimes when sleep steals over me, I say: "Go away from me, you gross intoxicant! I do not want to lose this joy in your unconsciousness."

Your whole body changes when you practice meditation frequently, because when you really contact God, all things become harmonious; all things melt into an ocean of peace. But you have to practice meditation earnestly, consistently, and continually, in order to have the full consciousness of that supreme force.

FORM THE HABIT OF
MEDITATING

Your engagement with business is important; but your appointment to serve others is more important; and your engagement with meditation, home, God, and truth is most important. Don't say that you are too busy with worry, and the care of keeping the wolf from the door, to find time for the culture of heavenly qualities.

Break your self-satisfied, doggedly immovable, old bad habits of idolizing your less important engagements and utterly ignoring the most important engagement: your engagement with meditation and God. No one else will answer for your actions, although others often become instruments in keeping you enmeshed in useless frivolities and so-called important engagements.

O sleeping image of God, wake up! Make the determination and the effort to know the right law which will enable you to keep your most important engagement with yourself--to know yourself, your own Soul.

Do not say: "I will meditate on the Cosmic Being tomorrow." That tomorrow may never come. Begin your meditation today. Today's practice will stimulate the desire to meditate deeper tomorrow, whereas this day's negligence will weaken your craving. Meditate today deeper than you did yesterday, and tomorrow meditate deeper than you do today. Meditate during most of your leisure hours. Instead of being absentminded, think of God. Seek God as the ever increasing bliss of meditation; and feel Him as boundless joy throbbing in your heart. Do not be lured by bad habits and paltry, useless vanity-engagements into crowding out God-contact. Seek to know God first, last, and all the time. Finding Him first, you will find all things that you crave through Him.

PRACTICE LONG AND
DEEP MEDITATION

It is good to start meditation at an early age, or, failing in that, to start meditation as soon as the mental discriminative inclination is receptive. It is very difficult for the occult soldiers of the mind to

reclaim the kingdom of peace after it has fallen into the hands of restlessness and material desire. Therefore, make spiritual hay while the sun of willingness to meditate shines.

The longer and deeper you meditate and affirm, the deeper will you feel and be conscious of the ever increasing joy in your heart. Then you will know without doubt that there is a God and that He is ever existing, ever conscious, omnipresent, ever new joy. Then you may demand: "Father, now, today, all days, all tomorrows, every instant, in sleep, in wakefulness, in life, in death, in this world, and in the beyond, remain with me as the consciously responding joy of my heart."

Do not jump up after only one or two mental broadcasts, but with continuous personal zeal keep on consciously with the ever increasing hunger of your heart, incessantly, mentally uttering the foregoing affirmation for regaining and holding on to the lost unity with God, until you feel the ever increasing thrill of joy bursting in your whole body. This increasing joy after meditation is the only proof that God has answered through the devotion-tuned radio of your heart.

During deep meditation, when the breath becomes calm, a very enjoyable state of peace is produced; but owing to the strong ego-consciousness, the thought of the body returns, and the fickle loud breath revives, rousing material desires and sense distractions. The devotee should not be discouraged at this but should by deeper meditation learn to calm the breath and the senses for a longer period.

When King Material Desire does not get support from past bad habits, the ego comes to cheer and strengthen him. Those who equally enjoy sense pleasures and pleasures of meditation will not get anywhere for a long time. It should be remembered that even if one cannot conquer the flesh, he must meditate just the same, for then there will be a sense of comparison between the lesser pleasures of the senses and the greater pleasures of the soul. Those who fail to conquer the senses and who give up meditation too, become almost hopeless cases of spiritual decay.

If after deep meditation the devotee is thrown into a state of restlessness owing to the memory of sense joys, he feels greater inner discomfort and bewilderment as he suddenly finds that he feels neither inner joy nor the passing pleasure of the senses. At such times he is tempted to declare: "O Great Soul, I wish neither inner happiness born of self-control and spiritual adeptship, nor the pleasure of the senses." This mental state should be overcome, and can be overcome, by regular, deep meditation and by picturing the ever new blessed bliss felt in the deep caves of contemplation.

HOW TO ENTER REAL SILENCE

The scientific method of entering real silence was taught in the Lesson on concentration. And in this series of three Lessons on meditation is taught what to do after attaining silence, and how to use the freed attention to direct it toward God. In real silence both your muscles and your thoughts are quiet. You can silence the body easily, but it is difficult to silence your thoughts. They still run wild, jumping from one thing to an-

other with miraculous speed. But by using scientific methods, you can effectively silence the thoughts too. As long as there is motion in a pond of water, so long will you be unable to see the clear reflection of the moon in it. Remember, as long as a restless thought or a bodily motion remains, you cannot hear the Inner Voice, or see with the Inner Eye. In other words, God will not enter your temple. In an inwardly and outwardly quiet body temple, illuminated by devotion, love, and inspiration, God may be coaxed to come, which means that real vision and real intuition will be awakened.

BE FREE FROM
THE DELUSION
OF MATTER

Meditation is the real panacea through which you can permanently cure yourself of the daydream of matter and all its evils, and realize yourself as pure Spirit. Until you have built the temple of silence within yourself, until you have broken down the ramparts of habits with which environment has surrounded you, you will never see the glory of God; you will never have real peace and lasting joy. When you meet the Great One, darkness will pass away forever. The power of truth is here in these teachings, and if you will but make a determined effort, you will no longer walk nervously in fear and uncertainty on the pathway of life. (To be continued)

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

What is meditation? It is becoming one with the soul; it is dropping your relation with the muscles and with human limitations and remembering that you are a soul. When you begin to relate yourself to the soul, then you will be aware of more of your past experiences, and you will know that you have come down from the bosom of God.

In God lie all the memory and experiences of your life. In your inner contact the forgotten times and powers will come back into your consciousness. Meditation leads you to remember that you are not a mortal, but that you are one with God. During the daytime, when you are not meditating, you remember that you are a mortal, but in meditation the reverse is true. Meditation means dropping the consciousness of the body, remembering who you are, and then coming back and ruling the body.

THE BAD MAN WHO WAS PREFERRED BY GOD--Part 1

The loving Lord of the Universe has always visited ardent devotees. Sometimes before doing so He sends messengers to find out those devotees who are worthy of darshan (a vision or sight of the Lord). In India they tell a story about the time God sent Narada back to earth. In the West, Narada might be described as an archangel. He was a glorious being, freed from birth and death, and ever close to the Lord. During a former incarnation on earth he had been a great devotee of God, and so it seemed that he should be easily able to discover others who were pursuing the Lord with will and ardor.

Narada the archangel now came to earth incognito, garbed as an ascetic. In mountains and valleys and jungles all over India he sought out the hermits and renunciants whose thoughts were centered on God and who performed all actions only for Him. While ambling through a dark woodland one day, he spied a hoary anchorite practicing different kinds of postures and undergoing penances under the cool shade of a huge umbrella-like tamarind tree. As if he were merely a leisurely wanderer, Narada approached and greeted the ascetic, inquiring curiously, "Who are you, and what are you doing?"

"My name is Bhadraka," the hermit replied. "I am an old anchorite. I have been practicing rigorous physical discipline for eighty years." He added disconsolately, "Without achieving any marked results." Narada then introduced himself: "I am a special messenger sent by the Lord of the Universe to seek out His true devotees."

Realizing that at last his opportunity had come, the anchorite pompously assured Narada of his worthiness to be honored by the Lord. "Esteemed Emissary," he said, "surely your eyes are now beholding the greatest devotee of the Lord on this earth. Think of it, for eighty years, rain or shine I have practiced every imaginable technique of torturous mental and physical self-discipline to attain knowledge, and to find merit in the Lord's eyes."

Narada was impressed. "Even though I am from those higher planes where greater accomplishments are possible, I am very much touched by your persistence," he assured the old man. Bhadraka had been brooding on his grievances while talking to Narada, and instead of being comforted by Narada's words, he spoke angrily. "Well then, since you are so close to the Lord, please find out why He has kept away from me for so long. When next you meet Him, do ask why He has not responded to my disciplinary exercises. Will you promise me that?"

Narada agreed to the old man's request, and then resumed his search for earnest devotees of God. In one place he paused to watch a most amusing incident taking place at the roadside. A very handsome and determined young man was trying to build a fence. Unfortunately he was dead drunk, and his senses kept deceiving him. He had dug a series of holes for fence posts, and was trying in vain to fit an unwieldy bamboo pole into one of these elusive holes. He would thump the pole on the ground all around, but he could not get it in the hole. Several times he stumbled forward and almost tripped himself. (To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Saturated with devotion, O Heavenly Father, I will enter the heaven of Thy presence. Blindly groping, the urge of my devotion suddenly flings open the soul's secret door, and oh, what bliss I feel at the sight of Thy Light!

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Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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WE WILL LIVE IN THE GARDEN OF HAPPINESS

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Beneath the glimmer of Thy great light we offer the prayer of our souls. Thou art our Father, we are Thy children. Receive the humble offerings of our hearts. Take away the nemesis of dark gloom, behold us through the pores of the sky and through the windows of our hearts and feelings, and sit enthroned on the altar of our love for Thee.

Teach us to behold only what is good, to think only what is good, to associate only with those who are good, and teach us to meditate upon Thee, the fountain of all goodness.

Bless us all that we be not tempted by the serpent force, but that we may above all extol Thy glory, the glories of Thy heaven and paradise within us, that we may live in the garden of happiness and noble thoughts, that we may be filled with the aroma of Thy love, and that we may be saturated with Thy love evermore. Bless us, that we may always remain in the land of paradise.

PRAYER

Divine Mother, teach me in meditation to drop my consciousness of human limitations and try to remember that I am a soul.

HOW TO CONTACT GOD THROUGH MEDITATION--Part 2

Meditate as much as possible, and try to hold on to the quiet and peaceful aftereffect. As soon as the breath is quiet, your plane of consciousness is lifted. Meditation is the only way to keep yourself filled with the power of Spirit. Words without soul-force are like guns without ammunition; therefore while meditating do not think merely of words, but of their meaning, and with intensity mentally offer the thought behind them to God. On the throne of silent thoughts, the God of Peace will direct your actions.

Open the door of your calmness and let the footsteps of silence gently enter the temple of all your activities. Perform all duties serenely, saturated with peace. Behind the throb of your heart, you shall feel the throb of God's peace. Fill your heart with the peace of meditation.

Learn how to plunge into introspection about every experience, whether it concerns good books, problems, religions, philosophy, or inner happiness. Retire within the cell of your deep thoughts, and enjoy the peace oozing out of the fountain of silence.

CONTROLLING THE SENSE TELEPHONES During real meditation, all of the five sense telephones must be shut off. Silence is what the whole world needs, particularly those who are on the path of meditation and are striving to progress toward greater spirituality. Any attempt at silence is better than the ineffective prayer that is commonly practiced; because in such prayer, while the movements of the body may be stilled, the thoughts go on with their dance of restlessness.

As a result of closing the eyes in meditation, the sensations of sight are prevented from reaching the brain; and by sitting in a quiet place one can keep the extremely busy auditory phone quiet as there are no sounds to reach the brain. If, then, the two most important sense telephones of sight and hearing are disconnected in meditation, the other telephones of smell, taste, and touch become disconnected also, because the operator is then relaxed, and free from constant attention to the reports of the two busiest telephones--optical and auditory--in the body house.

YOUR SOUL'S OMNIPRESENT NATURE Just as from a seed planted in proper soil there springs forth a tree, so from proper meditation instilled in the soul the consciousness of Omnipresence will manifest. Because of long concentration upon the physical body and its necessities, the soul has forgotten its omnipresent nature. God is omnipresent. The cosmos is His body. Man's

soul, made in His image, has in it the seed experience of omnipresence. This consciousness of omnipresence is hidden in the soul, as a tree is secreted in a seed.

Looking at the body constantly causes the mind to think of itself as confined in the flesh. As meditation upon the Infinite grows deeper, it makes the meditator, meditation, and the object of meditation one. Then the mind becomes convinced that it is not encased in the body, but that it is in everything in the body of the cosmos. The mind thinking constantly about the body becomes limited by it. The mind meditating upon the Infinite becomes unlimited. Meditation is the art of transferring the attention from finite things--the little body and the portions of space in which mortals live--to the Infinite.

Men and women aspiring to expand their consciousness into the all-pervading God-consciousness should learn to meditate upon the cosmos. Meditation means constant thinking of the vastness within and without, so that the soul may forget its attachment to the limited physical body and remember its vast body as God. The ocean is the wave, the wave is the ocean; the ocean must know that it is the wave and the wave must know that it is the ocean. The Spirit Ocean knows that it has become the soul waves; but the soul waves need to recall, by meditation, that they are the Spirit Ocean. The little soul wave must forget its smallness, which is only a mental concept born of concentration upon the body, and must concentrate upon the universe as its own big body, of which the physical body is just a tiny part.

A mundane personality is busy with looking after the body and its cramped relations with a few other human beings. Such a person's consciousness does not extend beyond the gates of its own home. The spiritual man, through the spreading light of sympathy and meditation, learns to feel the woes and pains of others. He feels that the world, or cosmos, is his home. This is why the meditating aspirant must do away with little body attachments. He must learn to be proof against too warm or too cold climates. He must learn to overcome hunger and pain. He must learn to conquer all the appetites and attachments that govern the little body, for as long as the mind is focused on the body and its relations, the soul cannot remember its omnipresent nature.

HOW TO ATTAIN COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

There are three ways of attaining Cosmic Consciousness:

- 1) The social way
- 2) The way of discipline
- 3) The spiritual way

SOCIAL WAY The social way consists in expanding the germ of divine love within the soul. Too much love of self confines the soul to the ego-boundaries of the flesh. The soul is an omnipresent reflection of the all-pervading Spirit. The ego is the body-bound consciousness of the soul. The soul, as ego, forgets its etheric omnipresence and considers itself limited to the body.

Every human ego can imagine itself spread out in space, but can feel itself only as the body. It is when the ego begins to feel itself in other bodies, through practical sympathy, that it begins to regain its forgotten omnipresence. Unlike the shortsighted worldly man, the divine man works not only for himself as one body, but also for his greater Self, which he beholds embodied in all others. Similarly, you should not only feel hungry, desire to be prosperous, wish to be healed, or long for wisdom for yourself in one body; you should learn to feel for yourself in all bodies, in all minds, in all lives, in all souls.

Hence, the social way of developing cosmic consciousness is to love your family, neighbors, country, the whole world as yourself. Include the world in your love, and call yourself a cosmic citizen. You are the king; and in the kingdom of your love, include not only all human beings --but also animals, flowers, the flocks of stars pasturing on the long savannahs of the blue--all living creatures. Love all men as your brothers; love all women as your sisters; love all elderly men and women as your parents; and love all human beings--the black, white, brown, yellow, red, and olive-colored races--as your friends and brothers. This is the social way of attaining cosmic consciousness.

WAY OF DISCIPLINE By mental and physical discipline rise above the consciousness of caste, color, dogmatic creed, family, race, nationality, and poverty. Make it a rule to be pleasant and to exercise self-control. Be kind, abstemious, and moderate. Do things that give you lasting happiness. Speak no untruth. Abhor stealing, overindulgence, worry, fear, anger, greed, jealousy, and restlessness. Learn to withstand heat and cold, and to endure happiness without mental excitement. Rise above sensations even though you are still subject to them.

Meditate, by withdrawing your attention from objects of sense and from muscles, lungs, breath, and heart, and concentrating that freed attention upon the spine. Then go out through the medulla oblongata into infinite space.

SPIRITUAL WAY The inner way of developing cosmic consciousness lies in practicing the art of living on the sense plane without making sense contacts: that is, the art of controlling the senses--operating them or switching them off at will in the various sense organs.

1. Learn to switch the consciousness and life current on and off from the heart, breath, and lungs.
2. Put life force in all the muscles and then relax.
3. Switch the consciousness and will power on and off from the spine.
4. Switch the consciousness on and off from the six plexuses--coccygeal, sacral, lumbar, dorsal, cervical, and medullary--and from the cerebrum and cerebellum.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Why is meditation the only way to God? Because the only way that He can be known is by following His laws of righteousness and by deep contemplation upon Him until you become one with Him. "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). He will look in your heart and see whether you have utilized the powers that He has given you and whether you know Him or not. Why waste time? Meditation is the only way to know God.

Remember, if you forget God, it will not be God who will punish you; you will create your own misery. If you know God, He will reveal to you that this life is only a drama and that you are immortal, that you were never sick, that you were never dead, and you were never unhappy. It was all a dream. There is no other way to find God except through meditation practiced in the way the masters teach it. Follow that method. Veils will fall from your mind and every thought and every thing will be a window through which you will behold the face of the King.

THE BAD MAN WHO WAS PREFERRED BY GOD--Part 2

At first Narada thought this spectacle was very funny. But the young man began to call upon the Lord to come and help him, and when this brought no results, he became angry and began to threaten God with curses and shouts: "You unfeeling, lazy God, what a fine friend You are! Come here now and help me to fix my pole in this hole, or I'll thrust the bamboo right through Your hard heart."

Just then the young man's wandering gaze fastened on Narada, standing shocked and agape at the drunken one's temerity. His wrath diverted, the young man exclaimed, "You good-for-nothing idler, how dare you just stand there, staring at me like that?" Taken aback, Narada said meekly: "Shall I help you to set your pole?"

"No," growled the young man, "I will accept no help but that of my Divine Friend, that sly Eluder who has been playing hide-and-seek with me, who is even now hiding behind the clouds, trying to evade working with me."

"You drunken fool," said Narada, "aren't you afraid to curse the omnipresent Lord?"

"Oh no, He understands me better than you do," was the instant reply. "And who are you anyway?" demanded the swaying young man, trying to keep his eyes focused on the visitor.

Narada answered truthfully: "I am a messenger from the all-powerful Lord, and I am searching out His true devotees on earth."

"Oh!" the young man exclaimed eagerly. "In that case I ask you to please put in a good word for me when you see the Divine Friend. Even

though I behave badly now and then, and abuse the powers He gave me, please do remind Him about me. And ask Him why He has been delaying His visit to me, and when He is coming, for I have been waiting and waiting and always expecting Him." Narada felt sorry for the fellow, and so, half reluctantly, he agreed to the man's request, although he was privately thinking that this drunkard would have very little chance of meeting the Lord!

After Narada had traveled all over, and noted the names and accomplishments of many devotees, he suddenly felt so lonely for the Lord's loving smile that he discarded his earthly form and rushed straight to the heavenly abode, as swiftly as thought could carry him. In an instant he was there before the Beloved One, surrounded by a warm glow of divine love.

"Welcome, dear Narada," said the Lord gently, and the light from His lotus eyes melted the last vestige of earthly tension that clung to His messenger's aura. "Tell Me about your earthly excursions." Narada gave a full report, ending with descriptions of the two devotees who seemed to exemplify opposite ends of the scale of virtue--the pious old anchorite and the intoxicated young man with the pole.

"You know, Beloved Lord, sometimes I think You are too hard to please, and even cruel," Narada said seriously. "Think how You treated that anchorite, Bhadraka, who has been waiting for eighty years for You, under a tamarind tree. You know whom I mean!" The Lord thought for a moment, and even sought a response from His all-recording heart, but He answered, "No, I don't remember him."

"Why how can that be possible?" Narada exclaimed. "That devoted man has been practicing all sorts of harsh disciplines these eighty years just to attract Your attention." But the Lord only shrugged indifferently. "No matter what the anchorite has been practicing, he has not yet touched My heart. What next?"

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Through the transparency of my deepest meditation, I will consciously receive the light of the omnipresent Father constantly passing through me; and I shall be a son of God even as Jesus was, by receiving God fully, through my sacred, meditation-expanded consciousness.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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DIVINE MOTHER

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Divine Mother, I heard Thy voice in the speaking fragrance of the rose. I heard Thy voice in the lisping whispers of my devotion. I heard Thy voice beneath the din of my noisiest thoughts. It was Thy love that spoke through the voice of friendship. I touched Thy tenderness in the softness of the lily.

O Divine Mother, break the dawn and show Thy face of light! Break the sun and show Thy face of power! Break the night and show Thy moonèd face! Break my thoughts and show Thy face of wisdom! Break my feelings and show Thy face of love! Break my pride and show Thy face of humbleness! Break my wisdom and show Thy face of perfection!

As I called to Thee in the wilderness of my loneliness, Thou didst burst through the dawn to greet me with Thy joy. Thou didst emerge from the molten door of the sun to pour Thy power into the pores of my life. Thou didst tear away the night of my ignorance to reveal Thy silver rays of speaking silence!

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, may the magic wand of meditation touch all sounds and melt them into the One Cosmic Sound of Om.

HOW TO CONTACT GOD THROUGH MEDITATION--Part 3

(Based upon the truths revealed in St. John's Revelation, Patanjali's Raja Yoga, and upon basic principles discovered by modern science.)

Now you are eager to know the method by which you can contact God through meditation. It is necessary to achieve attunement with Spirit or Divine Consciousness before one can realize Divine Consciousness. In meditation you learn to contact Spirit, or the Creator, in reality. Words cannot convey to you the wonderful realizations and intuitions that the technique of meditation presented in this Lesson will bring you; it would be impossible even to name them all here. If you practice regularly, faithfully, and reverently, you will get them all finally. You will be able to hear the vibrations of the astral centers of consciousness and life in the spine, and in time you will be intuitionnally in tune with the Cosmic Vibration. Continued right practice of this technique will give you an unparalleled command over your mind, enabling you to focus it in the most intense way on any object of thought--intellectual, physical, or spiritual. This is as true as the statement that the sun rises in the east. The technique will also help you tremendously to increase your power for the accomplishment of great work in life. Above all, it will enable you to contact the superconsciousness of the soul and through that the cosmic consciousness of Spirit, giving you the wonderful peace, harmony, and poise of mind inherent in the higher life. It helps to soothe and rest the nerves and to bring about the most desirable bodily conditions.

Pray to the Great Spirit with a reverent, loving attitude: "O Great Spirit, help me to gather my inner powers and realize Thee through Thy Cosmic Vibration. The universe is projected from Thee through vibration. It is sustained by Thee through vibration. Vibrations pervade everywhere. Thou art transcendentally omnipresent with the Cosmic Vibration. Through vibrations in me help me to realize Thee inwardly and outwardly. Awaken my sleeping powers. Rouse my infinite energy. Lead me to the vision of Thy glorious light of peace."

OM VIBRATION EXPLAINED "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). In the beginning of Creation was the Word of God or the Cosmic Vibration--OM (Aum, or Amen)--manifesting as sound, impregnated with Christ Consciousness. This projected creative power of God is the God that can be known through contacting Om.

"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, nei-

ther light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light" (Revelation 22:4-5). St. John makes reference here to the third eye in the forehead, with its divine light.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock (sound through Om vibration): if any man hear my voice (listen to Om), and open the door, I will come in to him" (Revelation 3:20). Patanjali (a great Hindu Raja Yogi) wrote: "Meditate on Om to actually contact Iswara (God). Om is His symbol (manifestation of creation)."

"I was in the Spirit (spiritual consciousness) on the Lord's day (the day of contacting the divine realms of truth), and heard behind me (in the medulla oblongata, 'behind' or in the back of the head) a great voice, as of a trumpet (the great blissful sound of Om)" (Revelation 1:10).

"These things saith the Amen (Om), the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" (Revelation 3:14). St. John here speaks of the Cosmic Om sound as the faithful witness or proof of the running of the Cosmic Motor, the force which projected creation, and the vibration of its sound as it upholds creation.

"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps" (Revelation 14:2). These different sounds are vibratory variations of the one Cosmic Sound. Each has its own particular rate of vibration (and hence its own particular sound) which is required to create a particular element in the cosmos.

To love or to meditate upon God, one must definitely know Him. By right practice of this Lesson He can be known, manifesting as intelligent, ever-conscious, ever-new, joyous Cosmic Vibratory Sound, or Om, reverberating all over the universe. By properly listening to and feeling this Cosmic Sound, one's human consciousness gradually becomes enlarged, its territory extended beyond the body to include the universe.

SCIENTIFIC TECHNIQUE OF MEDITATION

HAVE YOU A SPIRITUAL TEMPLE

The following Om Technique of Meditation--and every other meditation technique that is given in these Lessons--should be practiced in your spiritual temple, the room or corner of a room that you have set aside for meditation and spiritual study. If by chance you have not yet established such a place, make it a point to do so now. Every location reflects the vibrations of the occupation for which it is used; therefore you should set aside some place that may become permeated with spiritual vibrations of prayer and God-contemplation. Thus its atmosphere will be especially conducive to meditation.

Go to your spiritual temple and prepare to practice the Om Technique of Meditation. You will need a small table, about as high as your chest when you are seated, and a straight chair covered with a woolen blanket that extends down under your feet (to insulate you from earth currents).

Lay a pillow on the table. Then seat yourself and place your elbows on the pillow. The elbows should be just high enough so that you have no difficulty in reaching the ears with the thumbs; the spine and head must be held straight at the same time. This matter of position is very important, as the spine must be erect. You will have to experiment, adding more pillows to the table if necessary, until the right height is reached for maintaining the proper position in comfort.

METHOD OF PRACTICE God has enabled you, by means of your eyelids, to close your eyes and shut off distractions during meditation; He has also given you "earlids" to shut off mind-diverting sounds during deep concentration. These are the cartilaginous flaps (called tragi) at the external ear openings. With your thumbs push them gently in so that they close the ear holes, serving as stoppers to shut out outer sounds. During meditation the thumbs tend to loosen their pressure, so at the outset press firmly enough with the thumbs to close the tragi comfortably tight over the ear openings and thus shut out external sounds as much as possible. Cotton may be used if you have sensitive ears.

When you have placed your thumbs gently over the ear openings, place your little fingers over the lowered eyelids, at the outer corners. Very gently press against the eyeballs so that they do not move restlessly. Place the other fingers of both hands on the forehead. Turning the eyeballs upward and inward, converge your gaze at the central point in your forehead above and between the eyebrows. Practice will make it easy. This practice is beneficial to the eyesight when rightly done as described in this Lesson.

Keep your eyes fixed at this Christ Consciousness center for longer and longer periods when you practice. This will train the optic nerves and eyeballs to adjust easily to the position and thus permit the free focusing of the optical currents of the two physical eyes into the one spiritual eye. At first you may be satisfied with trying to keep your eyes fixed at the point between the eyebrows. After practice, however, you will be able to do this so that the eyelids don't quiver, and the eyeballs do not move. Then you may see a few lights occasionally. If you do see any light, concentrate on it.

By learning to focus your eyes in this way and by concentrating on any light that you see, you are preparing to see the astral light of the spiritual eye--a luminous sun, with a dark round spot inside it and a star inside the dark spot. This third eye--the door to the Infinite--is mentioned in Matthew 6:22. "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Many other lights will come, but no matter how long you have to practice do not be satisfied until you get the one mentioned above. Should you be bothered with hallucinations, keep the eyes open, turned upward, and fixed on the point between the eyebrows.

With your eyes fixed in this position--or on the astral light that will appear through practice--mentally chant, "Om, Om" (making no sound, nor any movement of the tongue). Keep listening in the inside of the

right ear to any vibratory sound you hear. Reverently be one with the vibration. You may hear in the beginning the purely physical vibratory sounds caused by the heart, lungs, diaphragm movement, circulation, and so forth. Go deeper. As you continue to listen, your concentration will deepen of itself and you will begin to hear the musical vibratory sounds of the subtle astral centers in the spine.

Concentrate with the greatest intensity of mental effort on any sound vibration that comes to you, and be one with it. Immerse your mind in it. Let the mental chanting of Om and the holding of the eyes in the upturned position be done automatically--without mental effort. All your concentration should be on listening to the different vibrations you will hear, first the physical and then, as you listen more deeply, the astral. There will come a time when you can hear the Om sound--which is like the roar of the ocean. If by chance you hear the ocean-roar sound first, you won't have to concentrate on any other sound. Listen intently to Om and feel your consciousness expanding with its vibrations, like an ever enlarging sphere, into eternity. You may be content that you are making progress toward hearing the real Om sound when you hear in the right ear the sound of a great gong or bell emanating from the dorsal center in the spine, opposite the heart.

Variations of the Om sound emanate from the various cerebrospinal centers. All of these sounds will come to you by and by, through regular, deep practice of the Om Technique of Meditation. The four lower centers in the cerebrospinal axis control the elements in man of earth, water, fire, and air. The vibratory activities of each center produce a characteristic sound. In meditation the yogi may hear first the hum, as of a bumblebee, emitted by the earth or coccygeal center at the base of the spine. The water or sacral center has a flutelike sound; the fire or lumbar center a harplike sound; and the air or dorsal center a bell-like sound. The etheric or cervical center, at the base of the neck where it joins the spine, emanates a sound as of rushing waters; and at the medulla oblongata the deeply meditating yogi hears the symphony of all sounds together--the oceanic roar of the Cosmic Om Vibration. It is this symphony of sound that you are striving to hear, above all, when you practice the Self-Realization Fellowship Om Technique of Meditation.

After you have practiced listening for the Om, you may put forth active mental effort once or twice to see the light of the spiritual eye in the forehead. By practicing faithfully you will be able always to see the light with closed eyes, while hearing the vibrations with closed ears. It takes long practice to be able to see the light at will with open eyes. When one can do that, it shows distinct spiritual advancement. However, listening for Om is the most important, more important than seeing the light. This cosmic sound, expression of the Cause of creation, is omnipresent; hence by being one with it, one acquires the same quality of consciousness.

Listen to the various sounds with ears closed, employing the techniques described in this Lesson. As you develop, you will be able to hear the Cosmic Sound of Om with open ears in a quiet or even a noisy

place, by the use of a little concentration. However, even though you can hear the Cosmic Sound with open ears, do not forget to practice the technique regularly with ears closed, as you have been taught in this Lesson.

Practice this technique for ten to fifteen minutes during your meditation in the morning; twenty to thirty minutes or longer when you meditate before bed. Bow mentally to God when you are through. Both intensity of mental effort while practicing and duration of practice are needed to reach higher and higher states of concentration.

If time allows, listen for the Om sound longer than the period suggested. Aside from the inner experiences of astral sounds, there also arises a great calmness. Hold to that calm during and after meditation as long as it is possible for you to do so. Apply that calmness in the practical situations of life--in dealing with people, in studying, in business, in thinking, in controlling yourself, in getting rid of any fixed mental or physiological habit or condition that you consider unnecessary or harmful, and so forth. Whenever situations demand discrimination and wise action, recall immediately the calmness felt during and after concentration; fall right into that mood, and meet situations from that calm center.

While practicing concentration, deep intensity of mind is necessary, but there should be no feeling of physical or mental strain. Practice with reverence and feel that in calmness, and in listening to the vibration, you are contacting the Great Spirit who is present within you as Soul, and whose expression is Cosmic Vibratory Sound--the vibration of Bliss. You will positively feel results after faithful practice. Even in the beginning the earnest student will get the valuable results of calmness and joy. Calmness you will certainly have. Deep intuitions come after prolonged practice.

Further, this technique will put you, by and by, in touch with the unexplored reservoir of soul power. Do not be impatient. Keep on! Make study and application of the SRF Lessons a part of your regular routine, as much a part of your day as eating or sleeping. The most beneficial effects flow silently over the whole mental and physiological constitution. As in everything else, highest results cannot be attained in one day. Practice--practice and apply! This Lesson is founded on tried and proven experience, from the time of India's Golden Age down to the present day. Self-Realization Fellowship students all over the world write to us, telling about their contact with the One Spirit as a result of their faithful practice of this technique. Everyone can have the same glorious experience if he perseveres. Without regular practice, which brings these changes in the inner consciousness, the student will not realize his goal. But with faithfulness in daily meditation, the bliss of Om will come.

Say your prayers after contacting God through Om. Fill yourself with Om, or the Holy Ghost, "the Great Comforter," and diverse spiritual powers will manifest through you. In Om-Christ-Bliss the abode of all healing powers will be found. Filled with God, go about helping others

to overcome their physical, mental, and spiritual troubles. Without serving God in the temple of the afflicted bodies and souls, you will never know Him. Help others every day, as cheerfully and eagerly as you would help yourself. The whole world is your bigger Self.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

By meditating upon Om, the pure cosmic vibratory aspect of God in creation, and on God the Absolute Spirit beyond vibration, one can develop soul magnetism and spiritual vibratory magnetism. This magnetic force has limitless range and power. If morning, noon, and night you keep yourself dreaming, feeling, and intuiting the all-attracting divine magnetism, you will develop a spiritual power that can draw desired objects from a distance, that can uplift others by the mere contact of sight, or even by your simple wish or your powerfully directed uplifting concentration. By this power you can draw friends from afar--those who have been real friends before. By this power you can make the elements bow to your wishes. By the invitation of the divine magnetism you can draw angels, the luminous creative forces, sages and saints of bygone eras on earth to come to you and dance in your inner temple of joy. By this divine magnetism you can draw the rays of all knowledge to come and sparkle and scintillate around your being.

THE BAD MAN WHO WAS PREFERRED BY GOD--Part 3

"Well, Narada began hesitantly, "by the roadside I met--" "Oh, yes," the Divine One broke in, "you met a drunken young man."

"Now how do You happen to remember him?" Narada asked complainingly. "Perhaps because the sacrilegious young fool was trying to poke You with a bamboo pole?"

The Lord laughed heartily, and seemed to be thinking about the impudent young man for some time before He turned His attention to the sulky-faced Narada. "O My Narada," He said lovingly, "don't be angry and sarcastic with Me, for I shall prove to you which of these two men you have just told Me about is My true devotee." Having captured Narada's interest in the experiment, the Lord continued: "This is really very simple. Go back to earth again, and first repair to the anchorite Bhadraka under the tamarind tree and say: 'I gave your message to the Lord of the Universe, but He is very busy now, passing millions of elephants through the eye of a needle. When He gets through doing this, He will visit you.' After you get the anchorite's reaction to that, then go and tell the same thing to the drunken young man and watch his reaction. Then you will understand."

Although Narada was baffled by the Lord's instructions, he had long since learned unquestioning faith in the commands of the Lord, so he thought himself back to earth, and was at once standing under the

tamarind tree, face to face with the long-suffering anchorite. The ancient one looked up at him expectantly, but when the strange message had been delivered, he flew into a rage and began to shout. "Get out, you mocking messenger, and your lying Lord, and all the rest of your crazy crowd. Who ever heard of anyone passing elephants through the eye of a needle? What it means is that He'll never come. Maybe there isn't any Lord to come anyway." He was now trembling with fury and brandishing his pilgrim's staff. "I've wasted my life! This eighty years of discipline was nothing but folly! I'm through, do you hear? through trying to please a crazy nonexistent God. Now I am sane again. For what little is left of life I am going to resume my long-neglected earthly pursuits."

Narada was too horrified to say a word, so he just disappeared. But the second part of his mission was not yet fulfilled; dubiously he came again to the roadside where he had met the noisy young man. The fellow was still there, and if possible, more drunk than ever. The fence was not yet completed, and he was laboring to bring the holes and bamboo poles together. But no sooner had Narada appeared on the scene than the youth's earthly intoxication seemed to leave him. In its place, the premonition of great joy caused a divine intoxication which lighted his features as he came running and crying, "Hey there, Narada, what is my Friend's reply to my message? What is His answer? When is He coming?"

When he heard the Lord's strange message he was not at all disconcerted, but began to dance around and around with joy, half speaking, half chanting: "He who can send worlds through the eye of a needle in an instant if He desires, has already finished passing those elephants through the eye of a needle. Now, any minute, He will be with me, and when He comes He shall touch me but once and I shall change. All my evil actions and bad habits will be drowned in my overwhelming love for Him."

So the young man danced in heavenly ecstasy, as do many devotees in India when divine joy becomes too great for their bodies. The feeble flesh cannot hold such immense bliss and--lest the very atoms fly apart and release their energy to the Divine Source which calls them--this bliss spills over into tears or into rhythmic movements of kirtana, into singing and dancing as an expression of this joy. And now as the young man danced blissfully, Narada joined him; and soon they found the laughing, lotus-eyed Lord was dancing with them. (To be concluded)

AFFIRMATION

I am the Cosmic Ocean of sound and the little wave of the body vibration in it.



Self-Realization Fellowship

Founded in 1920 by Paramahansa Yogananda

A NOTE TO THE STUDENT

Now that you have firmly set forth on the Self-Realization path, we would urge you to concentrate your spiritual effort on those techniques you are now being taught. For greatest benefit to yourself, and to avoid possible difficulties, do not mix other techniques and practices--particularly those of a spiritualistic nature--with the Self-Realization techniques.

The physical, mental, and spiritual disciplines of this path were established by our God-enlightened guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, for man's complete and harmonious development. No other techniques are necessary. The experience of students has confirmed the value of our Guru's teachings, and shown that other practices, such as spiritualistic ones, may prove harmful. Also, continuing with other practices dilutes the student's efforts with the Self-Realization techniques, and consequently the results. The serious student will find so much to study and practice in these lessons that he will have no time for other techniques.

Remember that spiritual development can be properly gauged only by the increasing interior peace and joy the student feels, and by the beneficial changes that he notices in his nature and in his daily behavior toward others--not by the number or unusualness of his inner experiences. The Gurus of Self-Realization Fellowship guide and protect the spiritual life of all Self-Realization students who follow faithfully their directions, which bring exact and known results. If you have any questions about this matter, please write to the Self-Realization Fellowship Mother Center for counsel.

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